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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7143  
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHZJ/HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY 2705  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 3036  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1741

UNCLAS PARIS 001250

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [UNHRC](#) [EU](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: FRANCE: HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL PRIORITIES

REF: SECSTATE 93374

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: France concurs with a large part of U.S. key goals for the 12th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) and solicits United States support for initiatives that they are sponsoring, according to MFA Assistant Director for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Cecile Vigneau, who spoke to poloffs on September 9 in response to reftel demarche. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Welcoming U.S. re-engagement with the HRC, Vigneau confirmed France's support for the continuation of the special procedural mandates for Somalia and Cambodia, but added there was more information forthcoming on Burundi. If the third bi-annual review of the Strategic Framework's implementation of the UN Integrated Office for Burundi (BINUB) determined the need for continuing the mandate, France would support it. On a Freedom of Expression resolution, Vigneau conveyed France's shared concerns about the Russian-sponsored traditional values resolution and noted that there is currently a Swedish text seeking a unified European Union policy on the issue. She noted that the EU has not yet reached consensus on the language of the text, as the fundamental problem of the resolution to France is not the question of values but rather assuring universal human rights and freedoms. Vigneau remarked that France anticipates the Russian resolution on the issue to be increasingly problematic.

[1](#)3. (SBU) French priorities for the session include stressing the need to work together on the broad range of issues facing the HRC and to continue consulting frequently and regularly on a bilateral and regional level. The GOF was pleased to hear that the U.S. supports the French/Colombian/Mexican initiative for the creation of a mechanism that would combat discriminatory laws against women. Vigneau stated that France will also be working with Mexico on an initiative to reform the HRC and would appreciate a U.S. endorsement of the effort. There is some concern that Russia may be trying to produce its own proposaal on HRC reform.

[1](#)4. (SBU) France seeks U.S. support for adopting the French initiative on the Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights. Co-authored by Peru, Chile, Belgium, Albania, Romania, the Philippines, Morocco, and Senegal, Vigneau recounted that GOF had experienced much resistance on the part of South Africa initially but the two countries have had positive exchanges on the issue in the past year. Recognizing that the text of the initiative is long and complicated, France hopes that the draft guiding principles will gain passage with the support of the United States as well as Brazil, India, and China, who are also interested in the issue. Additionally, Vigneau mentioned that the French support the British initiative on Burma that will be presented at the 12th session.

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